

New Transit Systems Aid Rural Montanans



With Montana's wide open spaces and small population, access to medical facilities, employment, shopping, and educational opportunities can be difficult for many residents. In 2005,

SAFETEA-LU* increased federal transit funding over 200 percent for Montana's non-urbanized areas (areas with fewer than 50,000 people). The additional funding has enabled MDT to help 24 communities create new community transit systems. Among the many beneficiaries are the residents of Bozeman, Granite County, and the Hi-Line.

In Bozeman, Streamline started transporting passengers in August 2006. Prior to that, Bozeman's only bus service was Bobcat Transit, operated by the Associated Students of Montana State University. Bobcat Transit provided 40 rides per day. During the design phase for Streamline, planners projected a ridership of 279 rides per day. The new service met that number in December of 2006, just five months after it started. A year later, ridership climbed to 554 per day and topped out at 693 rides per day in January of this year. On February 2, 2008,

Streamline hit an all-time high of 922 daily rides.

In rural Granite County, where public transportation of any type is severely limited, Granite County Medical Center plans to use federal capital funding to purchase a new 12-passenger bus with six wheelchair stations. Currently, the center uses an older bus (supported with federal operating funds) to provide countywide rides for the elderly, disabled, and general public. This service is a lifeline for Granite County's transit-dependent population.

Along the Hi-Line, Northern Transit Interlocal (NTI), began providing rides to Great Falls and Kalispell from its home base in Shelby on March 3. Rimrock Trailways formerly served the Hi-Line but stopped service in 2005 leaving the area without much-needed transportation. A 25-passenger bus travels from Shelby to Great Falls on Mondays and Thursdays stopping in Conrad to pick up and deliver passengers. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the same bus travels to Kalispell with stops in Cut Bank and Browning. A smaller bus serves the communities of Sweet Grass, Sunburst, Kevin, and Four Corners with service to Shelby and back on Mondays and Thursdays. NTI also coordinates its schedule with Amtrak's Empire Builder service.

**Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users*



National Work Zone Awareness Week Reminds Drivers to Slow for the Cone

April 7–11 marks the ninth annual National Work Zone Awareness Week, a time to remind motorists of the hazards in work zones and the importance of driving with caution through these areas. The theme for the week urges motorists to "Slow for the Cone."

Staying alert and observing posted signage are vital when traveling through work zones. Surprisingly, the vast majority of fatalities in work zones are motorists, not the workers themselves.

In 2006, 78 percent of Montana's work zone crashes were on straight roads, and 91 percent occurred during clear weather. Eighty percent of crashes were on dry roads and 79 percent occurred during daylight.

MDT suggests following these safety tips when driving through work zones:

- Plan ahead. Dial 511 or visit <http://mdt511.com> for current construction and road information.
- Pay attention to signs and obey road crew flaggers.

- Be alert, expect the unexpected, and avoid distractions.
- Remain calm and patient—work zones aren't designed to be annoying. They are designed for safety. Keep in mind that the purpose of the project is to improve the road for future travel.
- Follow posted speeds, even when crews are not present.
- Give large trucks extra room.
- Don't tailgate.
- Keep headlights on even when you are stopped.

Even when a work zone looks inactive, it is vital to follow posted signs. Work may not be underway, but conditions may present hazards that are not readily apparent but require slower speeds and extra caution. Remember, fines double in work zones.



Rural States Call for Balanced National Highway Program



Pavers lay down a new surface on U.S. Highway 2, near Kalispell. From mid 2005 to late 2006, costs of awarded contracts increased 22 percent, partly due to rising costs of asphalt.

Testifying on behalf of five western states before the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission in Phoenix on February 12, MDT Director Jim Lynch stressed the national economic importance of good transportation in "bridge" states and the need for a well-balanced national transportation program to meet their needs.

Lynch said, "The many commercial trucks on rural Interstate highways in states like Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming demonstrate every day that people and businesses in major metropolitan areas benefit from the nation's investment in arterial highways in rural states."

Lynch cited statistics on the truck volume moving across those states, which ranged from 77 percent in Wyoming to 53 percent in Idaho. The national average is 45 percent. He added, "There is a national interest in facilitating interstate commerce and mobility that requires good highways in and connecting across rural areas." Significant federal investment is needed to meet that national interest, he said.

At the same time, Lynch added, the rural nature of states like Montana means "that our large road networks have very few people per lane mile to support them."

"We believe," he said, "that strong federal funding leadership is essential to maintaining and improving a national highway and surface transportation network that meets the needs of people and business, particularly in states like ours."

Lynch also discounted toll roads as a practical solution to transportation needs in rural states. Speaking on behalf of MDT and the departments of transportation of Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, Lynch said, "We have observed a lively debate about the role of public-private partnerships and tolling in meeting the nation's transportation needs. We say 'observed' because while public-private partnerships and tolling may have a modest role in meeting transportation needs in some areas of the country, our states do not have the traffic densities

to make tolling a viable option."

Lynch's testimony shed light on the current funding crisis in rural states triggered by soaring inflation of construction costs. Lynch testified that Montana experienced an increase in costs of 22 percent for awarded bids from mid 2005 to late 2006. He attributed the cost increases to the rising price of oil and asphalt and testified that as a result, "transportation departments have no choice but to push projects out into the future because their budgets cannot cover as many projects as originally estimated."

The rural states also encouraged the Commission to recommend continued federal funding of routes classified below the National Highway System, such as roadways that serve agriculture, resource, and energy industries like ethanol production; roads that provide access to natural treasures like Yellowstone National Park; and roads to tribal reservations and rural areas no longer served by rail lines.

Lynch said, "We consider it essential that the Commission expressly recognizes in its recommendations and report to Congress that significantly increased federal investment in highways and surface transportation in rural states is, and will remain, important to the national interest."

FHWA Adopts New Traffic Sign Standards

One of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) primary missions is to improve safety on the nation's roadways. More than 42,000 people have been killed on roads in the U.S. during each of the past eight years. While only one-quarter of all travel occurs at night, about half of all traffic fatalities occur during nighttime hours. To address this disparity, FHWA has adopted new traffic sign retroreflectivity requirements. (Retroreflectivity is the property of a material to reflect light back toward its source.)

Public agencies have until January 2012 to implement and then continue to use an assessment or management method designed to maintain traffic sign retroreflectivity at or above the minimum levels specified. They will have until January 2015 to replace any regulatory, warning, or post-mounted guide signs (except street name signs), and until January 2018 to replace street name signs and overhead guide signs that do not meet minimum retroreflectivity levels.

The seven to ten year compliance period should allow highway departments replace noncompliant signs as part of their typical sign replacement cycle. Long-term savings resulting from the longer life of the higher performance sheeting products may offset cost increases from upgrading materials and processes.

The new requirements are included in Revision 2 of the 2003 MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices). For additional information, visit the FHWA sign retroreflectivity Web site at http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadway_dept/retro/sign/sign_retro.htm.

How Rural Is Montana?

Montana is not just rural, it's hyper-rural. Compared to the average U.S. population density of about 80 persons per square mile, Montana's population density of about 6 persons per square mile leaves a lot of empty space in Big Sky Country.

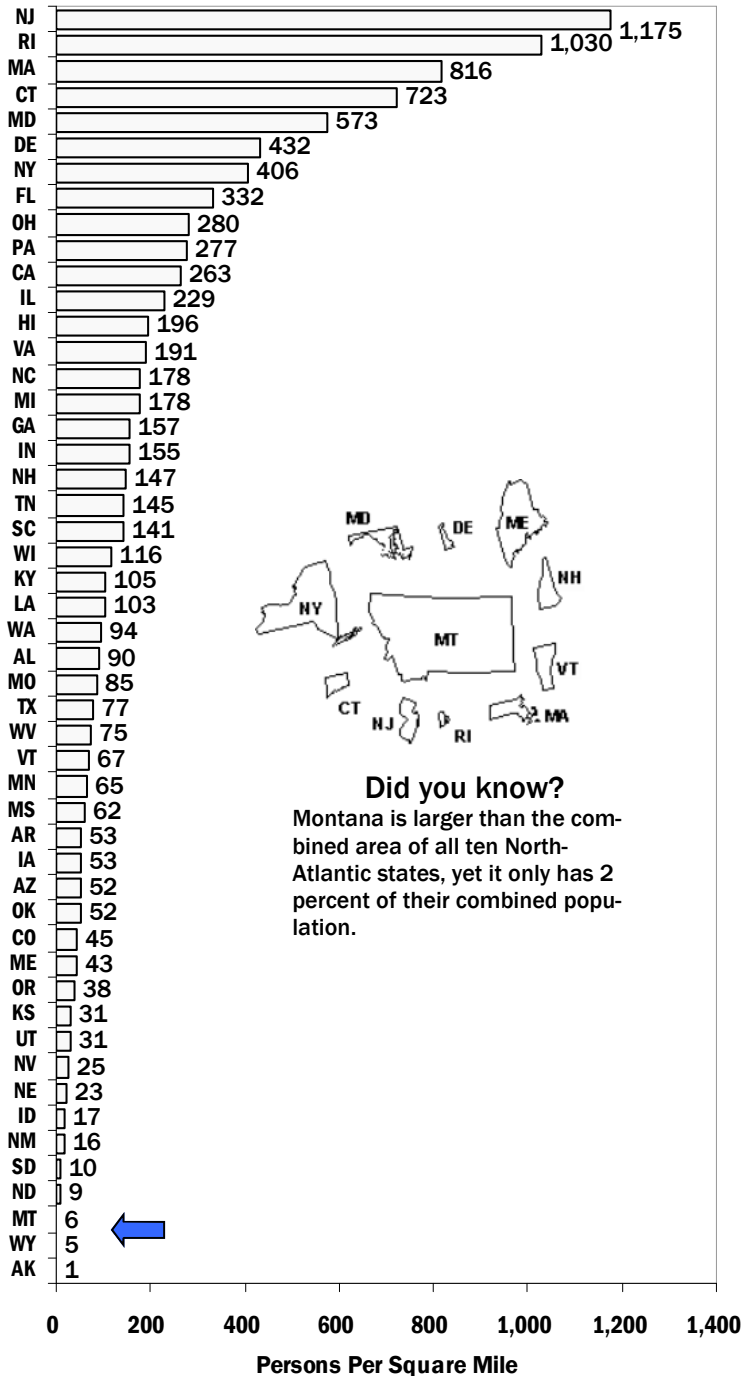
Not one of Montana's 56 counties has a population density that comes close to the national average. Yellowstone County, with Montana's largest city (Billings), comes closest with 49 persons per square mile.

Beginning in the 18th Century, the U.S. Census Bureau used a population density of two persons per square mile to deter-

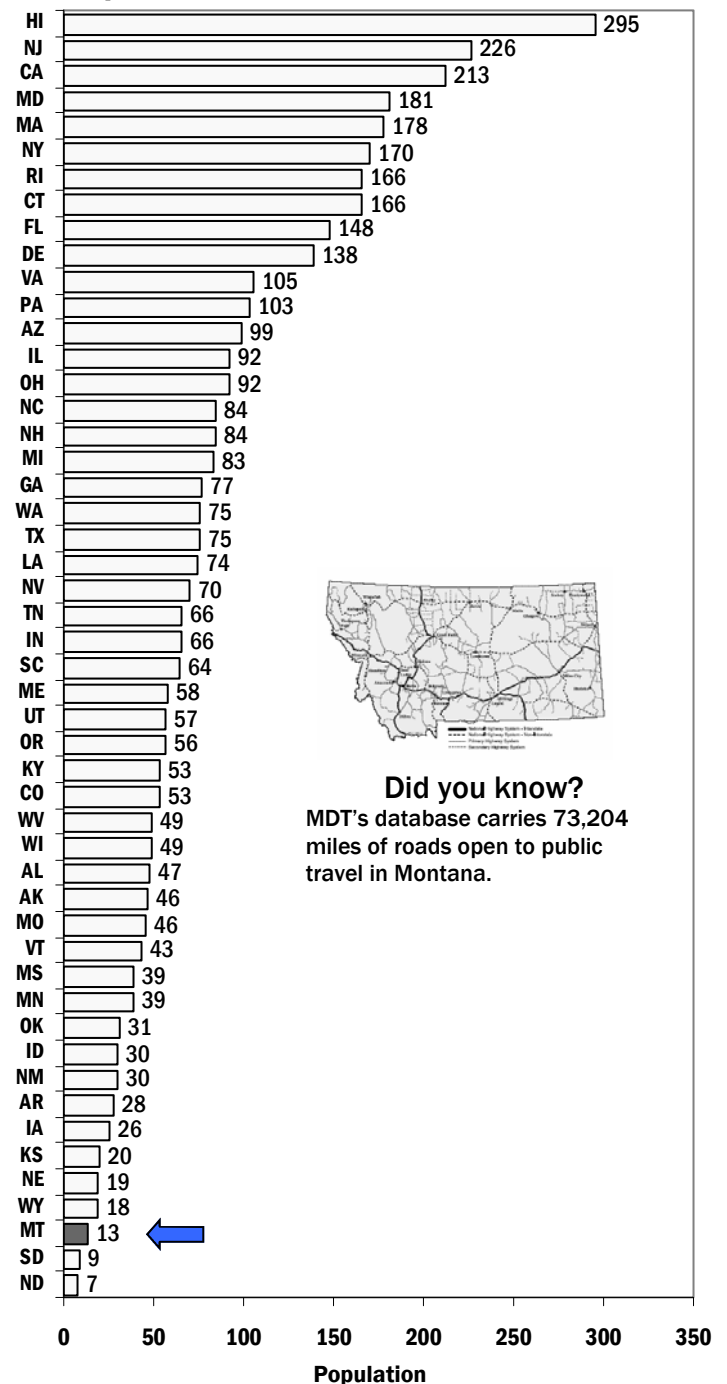
mine whether an area was "frontier" or "settled." Although the Census Bureau decided in 1890 to declare that all of the U.S. was settled, and the "frontier" era was over, this declaration did not mean that large areas of the West were truly settled. In fact, in 2007, Montana had 22 counties that would still be classified as "frontier" based on the 18th Century Census Bureau criteria of two persons per square mile.

The following tables from the Federal Highway Administration's *Highway Statistics 2005* present a graphic picture of Montana's status as one of the nation's most rural states.

Population Density



Population Per Mile of Public Road



Billings Drug Court Attempts to Rehabilitate Offenders

In Montana, the most commonly used and frequently abused substance is alcohol. The state's largest city, Billings, is no exception.

In an effort to increase public safety and reduce the number of intoxicated drivers on Montana roads, MDT committed \$8,000 to the Billings Adult Misdemeanor Drug Court (BAMDC) for specialized training to equip the program with the necessary resources to work more effectively with repeat DUI offenders.

Individuals who have been charged with or who have pled guilty to multiple alcohol-related driving offenses are frequently diagnosed with alcohol dependence or addiction. Their need to consume alcohol has made a negative impact, not only in their own lives, but also on the lives of their families and in the communities where they live.

Drug courts like BAMDC are designed as a rehabilitative alternative to the traditional court system. Participation is voluntary; however, those who enter the program find its requirements far more stringent than those they would have encountered had they chosen a standard plea agreement or sentence. Each participant is required to take part in an intensive treatment program where they are closely supervised and monitored, frequently appear before a judge, and submit to frequent and random drug and alcohol testing.

An effective drug court team facilitates offender accountability. Under the direction of the judge, the team includes a coordinator, treatment representative, probation officer, law enforcement representative, Billings city prosecutor, public defender, program evaluator, and corrections personnel working together to bring about the desired change. The team meets before each weekly court session to discuss individual progress and keeps in close daily contact to address any issues that may arise.

Comprehensive, team-oriented training is elemental to the planning and development of a drug court. For this reason, MDT provided funding for the Billings Municipal Court team to travel to Santa Ana, California, to attend drug court training provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in conjunction with the National Drug Court Institute.

The Billings Municipal Drug Court serves over 10 percent of the state's population. According to an independent evaluation of BAMDC in 2007, the primary and secondary drug of choice for participants accepted into the program between February of 2005 and February 2007 was alcohol, followed by methamphetamine or marijuana.

After three years of operation, BAMDC has seen 41 individuals successfully graduated from the program. Recidivism has been drastically reduced, not only among those who have completed the program, but also among those who have participated in it. An independent program evaluation found that employment among participants averages over 80 percent. For every dollar spent on a drug court participant, four dollars are saved in criminal justice and social services costs. The city of Billings saved \$138,300 in jail costs in the first two years alone.

. . . . continued at right

Research Projects: From Idea to Product

Each year, MDT's Research Section sends out a request for new research topics. This year, out of 17 research ideas submitted during the 2008 research solicitation, nine were selected and forwarded to technical panels where members will determine if a research need exists, and if so, who should conduct the research.

The nine research ideas that were forwarded to technical panels are listed below:

- *Assessment of Sediment Disturbance in Streams During Bridge Construction*
- *Determine Erionite Occurrence in Southwestern Montana and Relationship to MDT Highway Construction, Past and Future* (Erionite is a woolly, fibrous mineral with properties similar to asbestos.)
- *Geosynthetic Stabilization of a Weak Subgrade* (Geosynthetic stabilization involves using fabrics to support the pavement structure.)
- *Ground Penetrating Radar Analysis* (Ground penetrating radar allows engineers and technicians to see the structure of pavement without disturbing the pavement itself.)
- *Impact of Canadian Economic Development on Northern Montana Highways*
- *Keep Encouraging Young Driver Safety Pilot Study* (This is a pilot project to integrate graduated drivers licensing, driver education, and parental involvement to increase the success of young drivers and decrease accidents. Research has shown young drivers are more successful when parents are involved in driver education.)
- *Laboratory Evaluation of Subgrade Soils* (This project will investigate various methods of testing soils to determine which procedure is best.)
- *Pile Static Load Test* (A static load test tells engineers how much weight a bridge pile can hold before it bends or breaks. This project will test the accuracy of pile driver analyzer tests to ensure MDT is using the best methods.)
- *Abilities of Montana's Coldwater Fish to Determine Fish Passage Through Culverts*

MDT's Research Review Committee, composed of the director, deputy director, research manager, and division administrators, will make the final project funding decision.

To read about current and past research projects, go to http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/sub_listing.shtml. For more information, contact Sue Sillick at 444-7693 or ssillick@mt.gov.

Drug Court continued

If we are to continue to make progress against alcohol-related crashes and deaths, we need new intervention strategies to reduce impaired driving among habitual intoxicated drivers who have not responded to education, public safety efforts, or traditional legal sanctions.

Ronan Police Enforce School Zone Safety



In addition to physical improvements, such as sidewalks and crosswalks, that make walking to school safer, easier, and more enjoyable, MDT's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program also funds programs that focus on the behavioral aspects of getting to school safely. In Ronan, for example, SRTS has partnered with the Ronan Police Department to increase traffic enforcement around K. William Harvey Elementary School and Ronan Middle School.

In a survey distributed to the parents of K. William Harvey Elementary School students last fall, 79 out of 122 respondents said traffic speed along the route to school was a major factor in whether or not they let their child walk or bicycle to school. Because of the survey results, increased enforcement has been an integral part of Ronan's SRTS Program.

With the Ronan Police Department's increased presence around the schools and new radar guns purchased with SRTS funds, the number of citations written in school zones quadrupled between October and December 2007. According to Jennifer Rolffness, Ronan's SRTS coordinator, "The tickets have increased, but with that also comes the awareness that if you are speeding in the school zones, you will be ticketed."

CTEP Spotlight

Introducing . . . Phil Inman

Phil Inman joined the CTEP team in February 2008 as a project engineer, relocating from Terry, Montana. He earned an electrical engineering degree at the United States Air Force Academy, and his engineering experience encompasses both the military and private utility sector. Phil is excited to be CTEP's latest addition. You can contact him at 444-6118 or pinman@mt.gov.



Upcoming CTEP Workshop

The CTEP Section will present a training workshop Thursday, April 17, at the 2008 Trails Conference in Missoula. The conference, sponsored by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, takes place April 17-19. There will be no charge for the workshop, but there are fees associated with other events at the Trails Conference. For more information, or to register for the workshop or conference, visit the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Web site at <http://fwp.mt.gov/events/trailsconference.html>.

CTEP is the Community Transportation Enhancement Program. For more information, contact Mike Wherley at 444-4221 or mwherley@mt.gov.

Transit Tales



Mountain Line has served Missoula for over 30 years. The Five Valleys Regional Transit Study suggested that Mountain Line consider expanding its service to nearby communities.

Five Valleys Regional Transit Study

The recently completed Five Valleys Regional Transit Study assessed existing and future bus transit needs in the Missoula area. The "five valleys" include rural portions of Missoula, Granite, Lake, Mineral, Ravalli, and Sanders Counties. The final report includes data on travel demands, public input, and potential scenarios for expanded transit services in the area.

You can access the final report at <http://www.lscs.com/projects/fivevalleys/index.htm>. If you have any questions about the study, please contact David Jacobs at 444-9192 or dajacobs@mt.gov.

Bicycling the Big Sky

The 2008 *Bicycling the Big Sky* map is now available free of charge. This updated edition reflects the most recent traffic data available as of July 2007.

The map provides information on traffic volumes, shoulder width, rumble strips, and other highway features of interest to bicyclists. It also includes Montana bicycle laws, safety recommendations, and contact information.

Bicycling the Big Sky is available at bicycle shops and MDT offices or from Pam Langve-Davis, MDT's bicycle and pedestrian coordinator. You can contact Pam at 444-9273 or plangve-davis@mt.gov.

Additional bicycle and pedestrian safety resource material is available upon request and includes pamphlets on Montana bicycle and pedestrian laws, Share the Road bumper stickers and posters, *Walk and Ride Safe* brochures for parents and children, helmet fitting information, the *A to Z by Bike* booklet, and traffic safety coloring books. For additional bicycle and pedestrian program information, go to <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/bikeped/>.



On-line Map Shows Montana's Tentative Construction Projects

If you're curious about upcoming highway construction projects, check out the *Federal and State Tentative Construction Projects* map on MDT's Web site. The map, which only includes projects over \$100,000, shows projects scheduled between 2008 and 2012. You can find it at http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/docs/tcp_montana_map.pdf.

Montana's 2008 State Rail Plan Update

MDT recently contracted with Cambridge Systematics, Inc., to update the Montana State Rail Plan. MDT last updated the Rail Plan in 2000. Since then, MDT has sponsored or co-sponsored a number of reports and studies on rail competition and abandonment. Although the update process is scheduled for completion in February 2009, the passenger rail component will be completed by the end of October 2008.

The 2008 State Rail Plan Update will include the following major elements:

- **A Description of Montana's Rail System:**
 - Develop a GIS record of Montana's rail lines.
 - Work with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and railroads to summarize the status of Montana's current rail system.
 - Provide estimates of train frequencies on Montana's main lines for the 2035 forecast year. This information will be useful in determining potential community impacts of future rail traffic.
 - Summarize changes in the rail system since the last update.
- **Analysis of Passenger Rail Service Along Southern Route:**
 - Work with FRA and Amtrak to describe the kinds and costs of improvements necessary to permit passenger rail operations along the southern route between Spokane, Washington, and Williston, North Dakota.
 - Analyze schedules and scenarios that minimize or avoid negative impacts on the existing Empire Builder service.
 - Provide an additional analysis of a segment of this corridor between Missoula and Billings.
 - Provide a summary of potential funding sources for expanded passenger rail service.
- **Grain Facility Consolidation Impact Analysis**
 - Examine the current state of this business practice, with particular emphasis on effects related traffic movements have on Montana's transportation system.
 - Discuss grain production patterns, historical and projected, with the Montana Department of Agriculture and determine how the consolidated facilities are handling grain harvests.
 - Describe how Montana's use of these facilities compares with trends in other states.
 - Work with applicable state and local agencies to estimate truck traffic related to the facilities and compile a map showing roads most affected by the changes in traffic.

For additional information on the 2008 Rail Plan Update, visit www.mdt.mt.gov or contact Zia Kazimi at 444-7252 or zkazimi@mt.gov.

Become a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician

The National Standardized Child Passenger Safety Training Program is offering training for those who wish to become certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians.

The four-day course combines classroom instruction, hands-on work with car seats and vehicles, and a community safety seat checkup event where students demonstrate proper use and installation of child restraints and safety belts and then teach these skills to parents. Students must pass all components of the course to become certified.

The course is available to those over 18 years of age. The \$60 registration fee includes the first two years of certification. A \$200 stipend may be available for those traveling more than 50 miles each way to attend training.

To register, go to www.safekids.org/certification and click on "Find a Course." For more information, contact Pam Buckman at 444-0809 or pbuckman@mt.gov.

Classes are available at the following times and locations:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • March 25–28... Bozeman
Stacy Wesen (587-7786) | • June 17–20.....Helena
Tracie Nielson (324-1078) |
| • April 23–26..... Glendive
Dianne Stanley (256-2724) | • Technician & Instructor Update (Instructors only on the 23rd)
Sept. 22 & 23.....Bozeman |
| • May 7–10..... Great Falls
Mary Kay Burns (454-6950) | Patty Carrell (449-8611) |

MDT Completes TranPlan 21 Amendment

MDT recently completed an amendment to *TranPlan 21*, Montana's statewide transportation plan, to address requirements of the federal Safe, Accessible, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, also known as SAFETEA-LU.

TranPlan 21 is part of an ongoing MDT process that regularly identifies transportation issues, evaluates public and stakeholder needs and priorities, and establishes and implements policy goals and actions.

Although limited in scope, the *TranPlan 21* amendment process provided the public, resource agencies, and key stakeholder groups multiple opportunities to participate. The resulting plan continues to emphasize a multimodal approach to meeting current and future transportation needs of Montana residents and other users of our transportation system.

To request or view a copy of *TranPlan 21*:

- Visit MDT's Web site at http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/tranplan21_amend/.
- Call toll free 800-714-7296.
- E-mail requests to mdt_tp21_2007@mt.gov.
- Visit your local library.



New Roadside Geologic Markers to Be Installed in 2008

by Jon Axline, MDT Historian

In the spring of 2008, MDT will install new geologic interpretive markers at 16 sites throughout Montana. The markers are part of Governor Brian and First Lady Nancy Schweitzer's Math and Science Initiative. Launched in 2006, the project is intended to spark the interest of Montana's youth in the opportunities afforded by math and science and their importance in today's world.

MDT installed 15 roadside geologic markers in 2006. Hugely successful, the signs not only educated young people about Montana's geologic wonders, but also generated the interest of adults as well. In addition to the description of 15 significant geologic and paleontological features, the signs include illustrations, facts about geology, and activities for kids. The new signs will carry on that tradition. The first signs marked a collaboration between the Governor's Office, MDT, University of Montana geologist Don Hyndman, famed paleontologist Jack Horner, and Dr. David Baker, a geologist based in Monarch, Montana. Graphic artist Geoff Wyatt developed the distinctive design of the interpretive markers. Images of the original signs can be viewed at www.mathscience.mt.gov.

MDT is spearheading the effort to install the new markers before the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The department has been working with the Governor's Office, Museum of the Rockies, and Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology in Butte. The signs cover a wide variety of subjects about geology and paleontology. Topics include the coal in the Fort Union Formation of eastern Montana, the ice ages, the Jefferson River Canyon, the Billings Rimrocks, dinosaurs, and saber-toothed cats.

Markers targeted for installation in 2008 are listed below:

- Lone Mountain and the Gallatin Range (U.S. 191 at Big Sky)
- Hepburn's Mesa (U.S. 89 at the Emigrant Rest Area)
- The Shining Mountains: The Madison Range (Ennis)
- Mountains on the Move: The Bitterroot and Sapphire Mountains (U.S. 93 at Sula)
- The Shore of an Ancient Sea: The Billings Rimrocks (location to be determined)
- The Red-Capped Hills of Eastern Montana (Interstate 94 at Bad Route Rest Area)
- A Pleistocene Wonderland (U.S. 2 near Chester)
- An Island on the Plains: The Bears Paw Mountains (U.S. 87 at Big Sandy)
- The Ice Ages (U.S. 2 at Vandalia Rest Area)
- Kootenai Falls and the Belt Supergroup (U.S. 2, Milepost 21)
- Coal, Oil, and Natural Gas: The Fort Union Formation (MT 16, Plentywood Rest Area)
- A Lost World: Precambrian Belt Rock (I-90, Dena Mora Rest Area)
- Welcome to Dinosaur Country! (I-94, Wibaux Rest Area)
- A Passage Through Time: The Jefferson River Canyon (MT 2, Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park)
- Black Gold: The Bear Creek Coal Fields (Secondary 308 at Bearcreek)
- Landslide Butte (Secondary 213*)

*Tentative location.

This marker will be placed next to U.S. Highway 2, near Chester.

A Pleistocene Wonderland

Imagine you are a time traveler and have the opportunity to visit this area 25,000 years ago. You would recognize the Rocky Mountains to the west. The igneous and heavily glaciated Sweetgrass Hills loom on the horizon far to the north. The last of the great continental glaciers had retreated, leaving behind a hummocky grassland with ponds, swamps, and erratic boulders. The grasslands support an abundance of animal life, much of which would be recognizable as still inhabiting the northern Great Plains today. However, there would also be many animals that have long been extinct. Almost all of them would be much larger and adapted to a colder post-glacial climate.

Great herds of horses, pronghorn antelope, elk, camels, and giant bison would be a common site on the plains. They milled around with groups of blond-haired Shasta ground sloths and shaggy Musk and Shrub oxen. Columbian mammoths with long, curving tusks roamed the plains in small groups. Dire and Gray wolves and short-faced bears followed the herds in search of easy meals. At 10 feet in length and more than 2,000 pounds, the bears dwarfed today's Grizzlies in size and ferocity. Perhaps the most famous of all Pleistocene predators were the fearsome saber-toothed cats. Relatively small and compact, the cats may have ambushed their prey and slashed at them with their 7-inch long canine teeth. Perhaps even more deadly, however, was the long-legged American Lion, a killing machine bigger than the Bengal tiger.

Climatic changes, limited food supplies, and, possibly, over-hunting by paleo-Indians caused many species once common to the northern Great Plains to become extinct about 11,000 years ago. The American bison, gray wolf, elk, and pronghorn antelope are descendants of that primeval ecology.

In 1919, American promoters announced the launch of the Theodore Roosevelt International Highway. The 3,000-mile route, which connected the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, was ballyhooed as "the most wonderful Highway in all America." In Montana, it was a series of interconnected rutted county roads that became a nightmare of gumbo mud when wet. Despite the sometimes bad conditions, the route was a popular one with motorists in the early days of automobile travel. In 1926, the federal government designated the road US Highway 2.

MDT Wants Your Comments

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf, or give us a call at 1-800-714-7296. You can mail your comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to mdtnewprojects@mt.gov.

MDT Project Analysis Chief
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Inside This Issue

New Transit Systems Aid Rural Montanans.....	1
National Work Zone Awareness Week	1
Rural States Call for Balanced National Highway Program.....	2
FHWA Adopts New Traffic Sign Standards	2
How Rural Is Montana?	3
Billings Drug Court Attempts to Rehabilitate Offenders	4
Research Projects: From Idea to Product	4
Ronan Police Enforce School Zone Safety	5
CTEP Spotlight	5
Transit Tales	5
On-Line Map Shows Tentative Construction Projects.....	5
Montana's 2008 State Rail Plan Update	6
Become a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician.....	6
MDT Completes TranPlan 21 Amendment	6
New Roadside Geologic Markers to Be Installed in 2008	7

Contact Information

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only) or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 406-444-7696 or 800-335-7592.

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MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406)444-3423, TTY (800)335-7592, or the Montana Relay at 711.

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MDT's mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality and sensitivity to the environment.

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